



**U.S. Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Office
Western District of Texas**

Johnny Sutton, U.S. Attorney

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Shana Jones, Special Assistant
Daryl Fields, Public Information Officer
(210) 384-7440

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SEVEN CHARGED WITH PARTICIPATING IN MARIJUANA TRAFFICKING OPERATION

United States Attorney Johnny Sutton announced that a federal grand jury in El Paso this week returned a superceding indictment charging seven individuals in connection with a marijuana trafficking organization based in Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua, Mexico.

Defendants who are charged in the eight-count indictment with conspiracy to import and possess with intent to distribute more than 1000 kilograms of marijuana include, Hector Leonel Marquez-Ramos, Ruben Acosta Vargas, Carlos Fabian Pando, Daniel Martinez, Mario Alonso Marquez-Ramos, Esaul Guerrero and Diana Marquez. The indictment alleges that between January 2004 and February 15, 2005, the defendants conspired together to import and distribute in the upper mid-west, east and northeastern portions of the United States in excess of 1,000 kilograms of marijuana. Upon conviction, each defendant faces between 10 years and life in federal prison and a maximum \$ 4 million fine.

The indictment further charges that Hector Marquez-Ramos, Ruben Acosta Vargas, Carlos Fabian Pando, Daniel Martinez, Mario Alonso Marquez-Ramos, Esaul Guerrero intentionally conspired with each other to willfully, deliberately, maliciously and with premeditation and malice to kill Maria Elidia Liuzza by choking and beating her to death on February 15, 2005, in Juarez, Mexico. Courtroom testimony revealed that Liuzza's death occurred in a house allegedly owned by the Marquez organization in Juarez. Federal authorities in Mexico executed search warrants at that residence as well as a second residence where they seized in excess of five tons of marijuana. Anyone with information concerning this murder is asked to contact the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement or the Drug Enforcement Administration offices in El Paso.

Finally, the government is seeking a monetary judgement in the amount of \$10 million, the alleged proceeds of the drug distribution activity carried out by the organization.

Yesterday morning, federal agents arrested Diana Marquez, a Texas Alcohol Beverage Commission tax compliance officer, without incident. Hector Marquez-Ramos, Vargas and Pando were previously arrested on related federal charges. Martinez, Mario Marquez-Ramos and Guerrero are fugitives.

United States Attorney Johnny Sutton commended the investigative efforts of the United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the Drug Enforcement Administration. Assistant United States Attorney Juanita Fielden is prosecuting these cases on behalf of the government. **An indictment is a formal accusation of criminal conduct, not evidence of guilt. The defendants are presumed innocent unless and until convicted through due process of law.**

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